

Executive Action Briefing
ASAP Strategic Focus Area
Emerging Trends and the State's Capacity to Respond

BACKGROUND:

On April 22, 2008 the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) examined the strategic focus area of how to identify and prepare for emerging trends in substance abuse. From that meeting came a series of recommendations that will enhance the capacity of the state and its communities to identify emerging trends in Arizona. ASAP will coordinate with its member agencies to implement relevant recommendations.

MISSION: Identify emerging trends and enhance the state's capacity to monitor substance abuse trends and behavior in order to respond to the needs of families and communities affected by substance abuse.

STRUCTURAL NEED

Problem #1: Insufficient structures and resources to monitor drug and alcohol trends in the general population, especially among relevant specialty populations.

Goal: Direct resources to develop drug-abuse monitoring systems to provide current data and data analysis on emerging trends and behavior in the general population.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Provide a drug abuse-forecasting report as it pertains to substance abuse prevention, treatment and intervention capacity to the Substance Abuse Epidemiology Work Group.
- ✓ Continue efforts to replicate the Arizona Arrestee Reporting Information Network (AARIN) for communities outside the Maricopa County/Phoenix metropolitan area in Arizona.

Responsible Agency: ASAP will provide direction to partner agencies to include those identified as having current drug abuse-monitoring mechanisms, and the Substance Abuse Epidemiology Work Group and its Emerging Issues Subcommittee.

PROTECTIVE AND RESILIENCY FACTORS IN PREVENTION

Problem #2: Program and policy initiatives emerging from the State do not always reflect comprehensive or inclusive strategies that involve parents, youth, communities, consumers and policymakers.

Goal: Enlist parents, youth, communities, consumers and policymakers in the development of evidence-based prevention strategies that can adequately respond to emerging trends related to substance abuse.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Program and policy initiatives will reflect the need to respond to both risk and protective factors in the substance-abusing population.
- ✓ Programs and policies will utilize evidence-based resiliency strategies that protect young people from substance abuse onset or risky behavior.
- ✓ Provide local communities with data on emerging drug abuse behavior at the neighborhood level.
- ✓ Establish, when appropriate, communication to media that informs the general public about emerging drug abuse trends that pose a threat to the health and safety of the citizens of Arizona.
- ✓ Prevention programs and policies will include a strategy designed to monitor and respond to emerging drug abuse threats.

Responsible Agency: ASAP will provide direction and coordinate with youth-serving agencies, such as the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections. GOCYF and state agencies will indicate the need for coalitions/subgrantees to involve parents, communities and policymakers in the development of prevention strategies in its Requests for Grant Proposals.

Problem #3: Community-based organizations and local coalitions lack capacity to capture emerging drug abuse trends and behavior and to determine what mechanism should be used to report those trends to relevant agencies.

Goal: Conduct training to equip local coalitions and community-based organizations to identify emerging drug abuse trends in their communities.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Require state-funded grants to community-based organizations, coalitions and agencies to utilize a reporting mechanism that includes emerging drug abuse trends in local communities where appropriate.
- ✓ Conduct coalition training on how to utilize diverse measures to capture emerging drug abuse behavior in local communities.
- ✓ Utilize prevention strategies that move beyond drug-specific responses to more comprehensive protective strategies.

Responsible Agency: ASAP, Division for Substance Abuse Policy, Substance Abuse Epidemiology Work Group and its Emerging Issues Subcommittee, Workforce Development Committee.